

List Release Training: Session Two

Getting the Word Out

On March 14, 2006, Best Workplaces for CommutersSM continued its 2006 list release training series by introducing the Best Workplaces for Commuters brand and providing examples and tips to promote employer participation. Robin Snyder, an EPA Best Workplaces for Commuters team member, provided opening remarks and introduced the featured participant.

Featured Participants

Robin Snyder, U.S. EPA

Ms. Snyder's presentation is available in PowerPoint format at www.bwc.gov/presentations/powerpoint.htm. A summary of Ms. Snyder's key points includes the following:

- The goal of the Best Workplaces for Commuters list releases is to advance Best Workplaces for Commuters as a brand. EPA wants Best Workplaces for Commuters to become well known in the transportation and commuter benefits world. Ms. Snyder suggested that BWC Network members and employers use the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo in their job ads and on their Web sites. It is important to use the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo often and consistently.
- One of EPA's goals is to promote awareness of commuter benefits in general. First, EPA would like to educate the public about the advantages of commuter benefits. Secondly, EPA would like to promote the Best Workplaces for Commuters brand.

- Ms. Snyder recommended providing information to potential employers about Best Workplaces for Commuters through as many outlets as possible, including newsletters, invitations, and PowerPoint presentations. Providing information through many outlets will help capture employers' attention and spread the word about Best Workplaces for Commuters.
- Best Workplaces for Commuters has successfully placed public service announcements (PSAs) and articles in several media outlets. Ms. Snyder recommended using existing Best Workplaces for Commuters outreach materials as templates for upcoming list releases. Past media results are available on CD and DVD. An Earth Day Toolkit, including print and radio PSAs, will be made available by the week of March 20, 2006. Ms. Snyder asked the participants to contact her to request the materials.
- When encouraging employers to participate in the list release, Ms. Snyder recommended emphasizing the honor and elite status that come with the Best Workplaces for Commuters designation. Currently less than 1 percent of U.S. employers provide benefits that meet the program's national standard of excellence. As such, qualifying as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters is a mark of distinction.

Betsy Turner, Employer Services and Training Coordinator, Valley Metro Rideshare

Ms. Turner led the 2004 and 2005 Valley of the Sun list release efforts. She co-presented and offered real world examples of outreach activities and techniques



included in the list release guide. A summary of Ms. Turner's key points and examples includes the following:

- Becoming one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters is simple and beneficial. Ms. Turner explained that Best Workplaces for Commuters should not be viewed as a program; rather it is a way to recognize employers for benefits that they might already offer. For other employers, Best Workplaces for Commuters acts as an incentive to offer a more complete suite of commuter benefits. Many employers in the Phoenix area essentially qualified for the list before being officially recognized because Phoenix has a mandated trip reduction program. As a result, Best Workplaces for Commuters offered a way to honor these employers for their outstanding commuter benefit programs.
- Ms. Turner explained the importance of using creativity to create publicity and draw attention to list releases. Valley Metro threw parties in 2004 and 2005 and used small letter stuffers, such as feathers and toy clapping hands, to get Phoenix area employers interested in the Valley of the Sun list release.
- Ms. Turner suggested strategies for deciding which audiences to target for list releases, focusing on employers who already offer commuter benefits. She also explained the importance of outreach to high-level officials. High-level officials are motivated to earn recognition and have the authority to commit their organization to offering commuter benefits. She also suggested speaking with employee transportation coordinators because they control daily management of commuter benefits.
- Ms. Turner explained that if an employer already offers commuter benefits, BWC Network mem-

bers can offer them assistance and explain how to use the easy online system to complete the Best Workplaces for Commuters application.

Open Discussion

A participant from San Diego applauded Ms. Turner for her hard work and expressed her gratitude for the training sessions. She explained that she had also attended the first list release teleconference.

Ms. Stephanie Minker from Triangle J Council of Governments shared that she is putting together marketing materials for her list release. She is using Best Workplace for Commuters media results in prominent media outlets such as Inc., Fast Company, and Time to emphasize the national recognition that Best Workplaces for Commuters receives. EPA recently sent her color copies of Inc. and Fast Company issues from 2005 that featured Best Workplaces for Commuters PSAs. She explained the positive impact of showing employers that Best Workplaces for Commuters receives national coverage.

Closing

Ms. Snyder closed the session by announcing that there will be a conference call on Thursday, March 16 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EST and Wednesday, March 29 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EST to promote Best Workplaces for Commuters to Universities and Colleges. Contact Connie Ruth at <ruth.connie@epa.gov> or (734) 214-4815 for more information.

Ms. Snyder thanked Betsy Turner for sharing her experiences successfully managing list releases in the Valley of the Sun.

The next call will be held on March 21, 2006, and summaries will be available at <www.bwc.gov>.

